**Reading #2**

I was really feeling stifled that fall. My goodness, I came to college to grow and expand, and here I am shut in. In Chicago, I had had access, at least, to public accommodations, lunch counters and what have you. So my response was, “Who’s trying to change these things?” Paul LaPrad, a white Fisk student, told me about the nonviolent workshops that Jim Lawson was conducting. They were taking place a couple of blocks off campus.

Jim Lawson was a very interesting person. He had been to India and studied the movement of Mohandas Gandhi. He also had been a conscientious objector and had refused to fight in the Korean War. He conducted weekly workshops, where we would do things like pretend we were sitting in at lunch counters. We would practice things such as how to protect your head from a beating and how to protect each other. If one person was taking a severe beating, we would practice other people putting their bodies in between that person and the violence, so that the violence could be more distributed and hopefully no one would get seriously injured. We would practice not striking back if someone struck us.

The sit-ins were really highly charged, emotionally. In our non-violent workshops, we had decided to be respectful of the opposition, and try to keep issues geared towards desegregation, and not get sidetracked. The first sit-in we had was really funny, because the waitresses were nervous. They must have dropped two thousand dollars’ worth of dishes that day. It was almost a cartoon. One in particular, she was so nervous, she picked up dishes and she dropped one, and she’d pick up another one, and she’d drop it. It was really funny, and we were sitting there trying not to laugh, because we thought that laughing would be insulting and we didn’t want to create that kind of atmosphere. At the same time we were scared to death.

After we had started sitting in, we were surprised and delighted to hear reports of other cities joining in the sit-ins. And I think we started feeling the power of the idea whose time had come. Before we did the things that we did, we had no inkling that the movement would become as widespread as it did. I can remember being in the dorm any number of times and hearing the newscasts, that Orangeburg [South Carolina] had demonstrations, or Knoxville [Tennessee], or other towns. And we were really excited. We’d applaud, and say yea. When you are that age, you don’t feel powerful. I remember realizing that with what we were doing, trying to abolish segregation, we were coming up against governors, judges, politicians, businessmen, and I remember thinking, I’m only twenty-two years old, what do I know, what am I doing? And I felt very vulnerable. So when we heard these newscasts, that other cities had demonstrations, it really helped. Because there were more of us. And it was very important. The movement had a way of reaching inside you and bringing out things that even you didn’t know were there. Such as courage. When it was time to go to jail, I was much too busy to be afraid.

C.T Vivian was a Baptist minister who advised us and helped Jim Lawson with the weekly workshops. Vivian presented our position to Mayor Ben West on the steps of City Hall. He was an eloquent spokesperson. His fire was very much in evidence. He has a certain commitment in his personality that really pervades the things he does and says, and that was his role that day.

Then I confronted Mayor West with what his feelings were as a man, as a person. I was particularly interested in that, as opposed to his just being a mayor. I have a lot of respect for the way he responded. He didn’t have to respond the way he did. He said that he felt it was wrong for citizens of Nashville to be discriminated against at the lunch counters solely on the basis of the color of their skin. That was the turning point. The Nashville newspaper reported his statement in the headlines the next day, and it was one more step towards desegregating the lunch counters. That day was very important. One of the things that we had learned from Gandhi’s movement was to turn the energy of violence that was perpetrated against us into an advantage. So when attorney Looby’s house was bombed, that was used as a catalyst to draw many thousands of people to express their opposition to segregation.

--Diane Nash

1. What is the topic of this passage?
2. Is this a primary or secondary source?
3. How do you know whether this is a primary or secondary source?
4. Who is the author?
5. Is this a reliable source? Why or why not?
6. Was there any information in this reading that confirmed what you read in the other one?
7. Describe what you have just read in three sentences:
8. Which of these two readings made the incident seem more real? Why?